THE TASK AHEAD

—Luigi G. Ligutti

THE

Commonweal

FRANCE TODAY:

A Question of Confidence

by Donat O'Donnell

Church Militant

by Graham Greene

The Limits of Art

by Anthony Bailey

Volume LXIII, No. 14 January 6, 1956 Twenty Cents

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PURISSIMA brand candles 100% beeswax

MISSA brand candles 66⅔% beeswax

ALTAR brand candles 51% beeswax

ALTAR brand Blessed candles 51% beeswax

PURISSIMA brand Paschal candles 100% beeswax

SANCTOLAMPS

SANCTOLITES

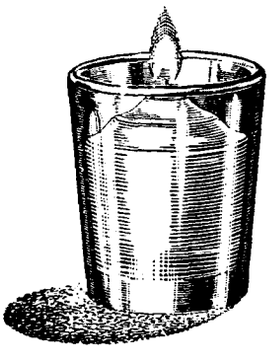
LUX DOMINI SANCTOLITES conform to Canon Law 1271

PONTIFICAL brand frankincense

KWIK-LITE prepared charcoal

MARBLE brand, POLAR brand, ONYX brand, stearic acid candles

That the minds of the Faithful may be aroused to contemplation...



"...that the minds of the faithful, by means of these visible signs of religion and devotion, may be aroused to the contemplation of the highest mysteries",* we have dedicated a rigorously disciplined skill, a most exacting chemical science, and a profound conviction that articles used for sacred purposes should incorporate in their manufacture, purity, dignity and fineness of structure.

*Mediator Dei

Will & Baumer

CANDLE CO., INC.

THE PIONEER CHURCH CANDLE MANUFACTURERS OF AMERICA

NOW IN OUR SECOND CENTURY OF FINE CANDLE MAKING

Syracuse Boston New York
Chicago Montreal Los Angeles

PURVEYORS TO THE VATICAN BY APPOINTMENT

THIS WEEK

Week by Week 343

A Question of Confidence
by Donat O'Donnell 347

The Task Ahead
by Luigi G. Ligutti 349

Church Militant
by Graham Greene 350

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 353

The Stage
by Richard Hayes 353

Communications 354

The Limits of Art
by Anthony Bailey 356

Book Reviews 358

THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

Editor
EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editors
JAMES FINN
PHILIP SCHARPER

Contributing Editors
PHILIP BURNHAM
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1955 in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685.

U. S. and Canada, $7.50 a year. Foreign, $9.50. Single copies 20¢.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Commonweal

week by week

FOREIGN AID

IT IS ominous that 1956, an election year, has begun with an acrimonious debate over foreign aid shaping up between the Administration and important sectors of Congress, despite the impressive gains made in India, Burma and Afghanistan by Russia's initial adventure into ruble-diplomacy.

Whatever misgivings the U.S. may have about the advisability of foreign aid are not shared by Russia; free from such economic niceties as home-market demands and wage-and-hour laws, her monolithic economy seems able to swing like a compass-needle. As her ambassador to Cairo said recently, "Our economic situation will permit us to give aid to any country—providing that country will accept it."

Today that needle is pointed south to Africa and Asia—the uncommitted third of the world—particularly susceptible to the Soviet's offer of "friendship" as well as to the Soviet's offer of financial aid and technological assistance, for here are the "needy" nations. It is little wonder that the Kremlin has chosen Africa and Southeast Asia as its principal theater of operations in the competitive coexistence phase of the struggle between East and West.

The real source of wonder is that Russia's clear intention and initial efforts to win over the one and one-quarter billion people of "the Bandung bloc" have left present American policy serenely undisturbed. The Administration, avoiding the initial phases of that "agonizing reappraisal" of which Mr. Dulles once spoke, is seeking to keep foreign aid expenditures "substantially within present limits." In the face of what would seem this unwise restraint on the part of the Administration, several "watchdogs of the Treasury," led by Senator Byrd of Virginia, have already begun to suggest that even "the present limits" are too high, and have voiced the hope that before too long the U.S. might be able to dispense altogether with its foreign aid program.

Thus the great challenge of the future is met with the unimaginative, penny-wise solution that has served us so poorly in the recent past. We should begin to suspect that paper pacts and military alliances alone cannot ring Russia's ambitions or blunt her effectiveness. Our current struggle with Communism, to use a phrase which our nation has coined but never seems to have fully believed, is a "war for men's minds." It necessarily involves political, economic and psychological strategies and tactics, executed with skill and imagination.

It should also be pointed out to the American people that this struggle will demand sacrifices and patience, for it is a struggle to win the minds and bring to full freedom millions of restless people, the world's have-nots, who are fiercely determined to change that condition. Such a struggle may well take a century, unless, of course, the war is over before the West is really aware that it has begun.

AFRICA provides an illustration of the dimensions of the problem which faces the U.S. and of our singular ineptness in handling it up to the present time.

This sprawling continent is rich in diamonds, gold, uranium and copper, but its two hundred million people are among those with the lowest standards of living in the world. Here are concentrated the growing energies and pent-up emotions of dependent peoples longing to be free, united in their hatred of colonialism and their resentment of the Western nations which brought it to Africa.

Thus racism and nationalism are the unvarying components in Africa's compound of tensions with their consequent dangers to the West. And in Africa's inflamed thinking about both racism and nationalism, the U.S. is included, since we have been, historically, the allies of the colonizing European nations.

Russia, whose watched pots usually boil, is already preparing to handle this explosive situation to her own advantage. African "students" are being trained as missionaries of Communism, and Soviet "technicians" and "explorers" have already fanned

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out through the continent to give impetus and direction to the smoldering hatreds of the natives.

The policy of the U.S. has been immeasurably less direct, dynamic and imaginative. In the vast region south of the Sahara we have six skeleton-staffed units of the U.S. Information Service to tell Africans about America. Our direct financial aid to the development of the distressed areas of Africa is only two million dollars a year, and is, quite revealingly, far below the millions sent each year to the African missions by the Protestants and Catholics of the U.S.

We can but hope that any official debate on the future of our foreign aid program will take place where a clock and a map of Africa and Asia can be clearly seen.

CHALLENGES

THE variation the Catholic Church manifests from country to country has many sources. History supplies much of the explanation, as do national temperaments, social and economic characteristics and varying political and intellectual climates. It is only in the great essentials that Catholics are one. American Catholics have a whole set of their own special problems. Some of the main ones are ably presented by Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., in *Life's* imposing "Christianity Issue," dated December 26.

Father Murray's essay has two pivots: the challenge confronting American Catholics in their present historical context and certain difficulties in the way of fully meeting that challenge. As he sees it, Catholics are confronted by two tasks: the first, in a highly propitious climate, is to reintegrate the things of faith with the accomplishments of science and genuine learning. The second is our compulsion to work for "freedom and justice in America and in the world community."

Among the obstacles to achieving these goals Father Murray refers to an exaggerated group consciousness, which often developed as a result of past persecutions and discrimination. He also finds evidence of an anti-UN bias which is curious for adherents of a religion which is by definition universal in character. He is aware of a disturbing tendency toward anti-intellectualism. Finally, as "clouds presently no bigger than a man's hand," Father Murray describes a "clericalism that would deny to the layman—in fact if not in doctrine—any real responsibilities" and the inevitable reaction of many.

It may seem ungracious to add to this telescoped catalogue of our weaknesses (especially without citing the author's forceful presentation of our essential strength). But there is one area to which Father Murray did not allude that also would seem to bear examination. Is the Church in America to be weakened from within by its adherents' material success? Many a suburban parish presents the difficulty in microcosm.

In a local community where there really are no poor, is it not extremely difficult to keep alight the flame of brotherly charity? As modes of living become more comfortable and consumption of the latest products of American enterprise more conspicuous, the wall of insulation against the world outside becomes increasingly impenetrable—particularly since our country's immigration rules conveniently keep all but a trickle of foreign families from our shores. Somehow or other, the pressures to meet the suburban family budget and the real strain involved in supporting substantial school and parish plants are not conducive to active concern for one's more distant neighbor. The general shift to the suburbs—in which Catholic families play a constituent part—raises a number of obstacles to that kindling and spreading of fire on earth demanded by the times.

YESTERDAY'S RADICALISM

ANYONE who lived through the Thirties remembers the general opposition of the business community to New Deal legislation. After the first flush of national enthusiasm for the newly-elected Franklin Delano Roosevelt, "conservative" opinion hardened in its opposition to almost all of his proposals. From the NRA onward, although an occasional businessman "joined the enemy," industrialists and financiers were by and large unyielding in their enmity for the New Deal and all its works. This fact makes a recent issue of the *U.S. News & World Report* of particular interest.

On the cover of the magazine's December 23rd issue is a large head, "No More Depressions?"—a sure eye-catcher in a country that has been depression-shy since 1929. Inside, leading off the thorough review of current economic prospects, is an article headed, "Why Businessmen are Optimistic: All Kinds of Cushions If Boom Does Slow." And accompanying this article *U.S. News & World Report* presents a summary of some of the reasons for the current optimism by businessmen.

Included in the magazine's inventory of the reasons for hope were facts like these: the government now has the power to act in an economic emergency, something it lacked in 1929; bank deposits are insured up to $10,000, something that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was not true in pre-New Deal days; every year, Social Security benefits and private pension payments pump billions into the national economy; the money supply is flexible, and the government is thus free to deal with deflation if it comes; government spending is high and, very importantly, it now tends to expand rather than to contract in hard times; the wild speculation of the Twenties is made impossible by government curbs; farmers are protected to a large extent by government action; wage rates are high and protected by strong unions, government minimum-wage laws and unemployment insurance; mortgage lenders are protected by government insurance.

Almost all of these features in our economic life, unknown in the Twenties, are now taken for granted by most U.S. citizens as quite normal. Proposals which when first introduced were damned as "radical" or pro-labor now have turned out to be "conservative" anti-depression safety measures. As we read, we could not help wondering how many people who today heartily approve measures like minimum-wage laws, Social Security, and the like, opposed them tooth-and-nail when they were first proposed. And, by extension, we also wonder how many of them are even now busy fighting every proposal to extend the philosophy of economic reform still further.

MOVIES AND CENSORSHIP

THE controversy aroused by two recent movies, "The Man With the Golden Arm" and "The Prisoner," shows, once again, how easy it is to affix labels to what is allegedly offensive or immoral—how easy, dangerous and eventually self-defeating.

"The Man With the Golden Arm," produced by Otto Preminger for United Artists, is based upon Nelson Algren's novel which won the National Book Award. The central character of the movie, as of the novel, is a narcotics addict. Now, United Artists is one of the major film companies which, as members of the Motion Picture Association of America, have agreed to abide by the Production Code, the movie industry's code of self-censorship.

In shooting this picture, United Artists and Mr. Preminger were aware that the Code expressly states that no film which deals with drug addiction will receive a seal of approval from the Code, and they knew that any member of the MPAA that released a film without the seal would be subject to a $25,000 fine. Mr. Preminger obviously meant to put the Code to the test. When the majority of the MPAA voted against altering the Code or granting a seal to "The Man With the Golden Arm," United Artists withdrew from MPAA and released the picture. The attendant publicity has not apparently hurt the box office, so close to the industry's heart.

The questions raised by this altercation are of the first importance, for they are questions of art and of prudence: of the rights of the artist to select his material and shape it according to the dictates of his art, and the extent to which these rights should be circumscribed by considerations of the audience.

The dispute over this particular picture spotlights one of the weaknesses of the Production Code, the attempt to classify or categorize pictures solely on the basis of "subject matter" or theme, with no consideration of how that theme is treated. Obviously some subjects, by their very nature, demand more sensitive treatment than others, are more open to collusion on the part of the artist, but we cannot, on this account, assume such collusion before the fact. If the MPAA is to make its Production Code viable, if it is concerned lest the task of censoring fall into less responsible hands, it must be willing to forego simple labels, easy categorizing, and judge each picture on its own merits.

That the task of judging a particular picture is complex and not a matter for hasty and ill-informed judgments is clear from the fate meted out to "The Prisoner," a movie that has been on an absolute roller-coaster of opinion in its trip across Europe. "The Prisoner" is essentially the story of a conflict between two strong men, a Cardinal of the Church and a psychologist working for a totalitarian government. The psychologist wins a pyrrhic victory in his attempt to break down the Cardinal. Although the conflict is personal, one is aware of the forces each man symbolizes.

The Vienna Film Festival rejected "The Prisoner" for being anti-Communist. The Venice Film Festival and the Italian Government found that it favored Communism. The picture was banned from Ireland, but Cardinal Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster, said that every English Catholic should see it. Opinions differed, it would seem, depending on whether one accepted the picture as a portrayal of the personal encounter of two strong men, or whether, with sympathies commanded by the forces each man represented, one emphasized the fact of the victory or the fact that it was pyrrhic. What is worth noting is that sincere, intelligent and interested people could reach such contradictory opinions about the film.

The reaction to these two movies sheds light on the pitfalls awaiting those who, seeing only simple and clearcut issues, would hurry to the goal of easy judgment, ignoring the complexities of art and the artist. The "subject" alone is not enough for the judgment of the critic; he must consider the treat-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment of that subject. And even those who recognize this truth and strive patiently to reach a sound, honest judgment may differ with others who are equally conscientious.

These are the considerations which art has a right to expect. Art lives, however, in constant tension with the demands of prudence, and there are times when, because of a grave threat, the freedom of the artist must be limited. But those who are truly prudential will recognize the claims of art. If they do not, their voices, grown harsh from uncalled-for warnings, will be weak and useless when they are needed.

UN ASSEMBLY ADJOURNS

THE admission of sixteen new nations to membership was undoubtedly the most striking event of the tenth session of the United Nations Assembly. The issues debated were many, and those positive actions which did result are indicative of what this world organization is capable of as it is now constituted. A number of the resolutions adopted were largely hortatory in character. Member nations were urged to fulfill their obligations on the support and resettlement of European refugees and improvement of the handling of the Palestine refugee problem. There was warm encouragement for further disarmament talks among the Big Powers and greater UN technical assistance in the underdeveloped countries.

Among the most important of the new agencies the Assembly set up are the International Commission on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy and a new advisory service in the field of human rights. Another resolution called for a fund for underdeveloped nations. The scope of constructive UN activity is plain enough. On social and economic matters it has proved to be more ambitious and proficient than the League of Nations. When it comes to keeping the peace between the Great Powers or, at times, of calling such a Power to task, there is the obstacle of the Security Council veto. In its expanded form the UN does, however, wield the sanctions embodied in world opinion more than ever before.

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE SOUTH?

EVER since the initial historic Supreme Court Decision outlawing segregation in the public schools, the voice of the demagogue has been heard in the land. And it is natural enough that as far as the rest of the country is concerned, such voices have almost succeeded in drowning out more responsible and moderate Southern spokesmen.

Typical of that part of the South which rarely makes the headlines is the Catholic Committee of the South, an organization of Negroes and whites operating in eleven Southern states with the approval of the Bishops. In recent months, segregationists have been bombarding public officials and candidates for public office with questionnaires designed to pressure them into upholding "the tradition of the South"—in other words, into refusing to comply with the Supreme Court ruling. During this same period, the Catholic Committee of the South has been sending out its own questionnaires —but their questions ask if the recipient will uphold the law of the land rather than violate it, and the answers are evaluated accordingly.

In keeping with the organization's general position, its commission on human rights recently urged that all Catholic organizations in New Orleans, including the parochial schools, should ban racial segregation. "We know that some among us are reluctant to improve the institutions and practices to which we have been accustomed," the commission said, "but this reluctance is more a matter of external conformity than of internal conviction. Obstacles to Catholic unity are not irremovable."

Thus spoke the Catholic Committee of the South, with a voice of conscience, at a time when sentiment on the question is running high in New Orleans. The defenders of segregation, we have no doubt, will find many reasons for wanting desegregation postponed a little longer. But loud as their voices may be, we also have no doubt that when the verdict of history is in, voices like that of the Catholic Committee of the South will ring loud and true over all the rest.

A BRIDGE

CAMDEN, N. J., is having difficulty naming a new bridge. Walt Whitman's name was originally suggested, but met with strong objection. A contest was sponsored among children of six surrounding counties to pick a name which would redound with more honor to the state. Few states would be able to nominate stronger competition than Woodrow Wilson, one of the suggested alternatives. But we hate to see Walt Whitman sold down the river, and we would like to join the children of Camden in offering a suggestion. We would offer, as a happy compromise, the W. W. Bridge. And those who do not like either Walt Whitman or Woodrow Wilson may deny them honor by fording the river on their own.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Question of Confidence

"PEOPLE WHO SET A VERY HIGH PRICE ON THE INTELLECT FEEL AN EXAGGERATED MORTIFICATION IF SOMETHING IS 'PUT OVER' ON THEM"

DONAT O'DONNELL

I WAS trying to telephone from Paris to a friend in another European country. As fairly often happens I could hear my friend but he could not hear me. Here followed the usual exhortations to speak up, the usual vain element in the void, the maddeningly reiterated question from the other end. I asked the operator to give me another line, but her emotions had by now become too involved to seek a merely technical solution. My friend, she told me, could hear perfectly well; he was just pretending not to be able to hear me; for some reason he did not wish to speak; if he did not reply it was *par pure mauvaise volonté*. . .

The incident, though extreme, contains the essence of much that is apt to trouble the English-speaking resident during at least the earlier phases of his stay in France. The critical moral emphasis, the unwillingness to accept an explanation founded on the inertia of things or human fallibility, the hair-trigger of indignation, the ease with which motives are imputed, the portentous vocabulary of judgment (*mauvaise foi, mauvaise volonté*) used in quite trivial circumstances, where English would have something like "I don't think he really means it; I don't think he's really trying."

In passing, one may reflect on the impossibility of translation, for to put these French words literally into English is often to distort, *in a particular instance,* since such French judgments have become, by wear, much weaker than the English; whereas to use the milder phrase which English would use in similar circumstances is, in a more general sense, to distort by dissipating the atmosphere of rather acrid moral intensity which permeates French speech and writing as a matter of everyday habit and style of living. That style of living—which reflects itself currently in politics—might be described as a permanent crisis of confidence. This crisis—daily visible in the market, the study, across a counter, in a train or in a queue—is perhaps at the root of the apparent paradox that this agglomeration of highly intelligent individuals sometimes behaves with a collective stupidity of which less gifted nations would be incapable.

Intelligence, indeed, is itself one of the motives for the general lack of confidence. It is not only that a nation of stupid people is more ready to accept what it is told, although that is certainly true. It is also that people who set a very high price on the intellect feel an exaggerated mortification if, in some small instance, something is "put over" on them and that they will take exaggerated pains to see that this does not happen. Foreigners at first are likely, from the little crackles of suspicion all around, to infer the existence of exceptional stinginess or exceptional dishonesty. Whatever about stinginess—always a rather subjective matter—there seems to be little foundation for the second charge, often carelessly made. In this observer's experience, French shopkeepers and others are even exceptionally honest. But—and this is the point—they tend to behave as if they believed that their customers and assistants were rogues and pickpockets. Checks are little used, and even bankers seem to feel that they are faintly immoral and will hedge their use with elaborate and costly safeguards; grocers will charge even their best and thirstiest customers for the bottles. It is better—think the intellectually proud—to lose trade, or to lose money on an excessive system of control, rather than to endure the mortal humiliation of being worsted, in some small transaction, by someone more quick-witted.

INTELLECTUAL pride, one of the most versatile and insidious of sins, is fostered by the French educational system. One who is accustomed to Irish or English or American children is likely at first to be puzzled, in the attitude of French schoolchildren, by the presence of something entirely novel: a genuine respect for intellectual attainments. The prestige of sport, and of what we vaguely call personality or character, exists no doubt for French children, but in a rather distant and secondary manner; the immediate concern is with one's own intellectual standing as measured by examination results. Those who

Mr. O'Donnell, the author of *Maria Cross* and a frequent contributor to The Commonweal, is currently writing in France.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

get high marks are admired, those who get low marks despised, not only by their teachers and parents but by the children themselves. This certainly makes the teacher's task easier and it also produces a great deal that is creditable and even glorious; any civilized being must admire the intellectual achievements of the French nation and reflect that an educational system which yields such fruits (among others, admittedly) cannot be lightly dismissed. But from our present point of view, in this brief and tentative exploration of a crisis of confidence, the system is open to serious question. It tends to produce on the part of the gifted (unless these have exceptional sweetness of character) a complacency and arrogance which, later on, give to French intellectual life a rather unpleasant though stimulating tone.

What is more important, however, is its effect on the mediocre, a much more numerous band. To keep up with the Joneses intellectually instead of socially, to seek to appear markedly more intelligent than one in fact is, must be exhausting, both singularly and collectively. It was no doubt of this group that M. Sartre was thinking when in a moment of petulance he wrote of "that slightly irritating mimicry of intelligence which makes a French face recognizable anywhere." And it is, I suspect, the mimics of intelligence, the men whose stupidity must at all costs not be detected, who are in the main responsible for the crisis of confidence.

It may be suggested, of course, that it is only the State schools which suffer from these defects, and that the *écoles libres,* with their greater emphasis on spiritual values and on character and even to some extent on games, escape the dangers of excessive intellectualism. This is no doubt true to some extent, but it is the State schools, with their generally greater prestige, and the State examination machine behind them, which set the tone of French education, and therefore eventually of French mental life. Not, certainly, that the religious divisions of France—and the attempts, on both sides at different times to impose outward unity by force—are irrelevant to the question of confidence. Apart from, though perhaps affecting, the general air of slight suspicion which breathes through individual transactions, one is aware of the existence of those great mental families whose distrust of each other is almost absolute: Catholics, anticlerical bourgeois, and Communists. All have, in the words of General de Gaulle, "a certain idea of France" and each idea is the enemy of the other. Each section can, and with varying frequency does, work with any one of the others, but only because its distrust of the third has become for the moment somewhat more acute.

Communist and bourgeois radicals can join forces on education (against the Catholics); Catholics and Radicals have had an increasingly uneasy common front against the Communists; quite recently Catholics and Communists voted together to prevent a measure which would have favored the expansion of the Radicals. As these great blocs oscillate towards or away from one another, distrust among many of the politically-minded easily reaches a paroxysm: each political opponent is excluded from the nation, almost from humanity, and each political friend is a potential traitor or, at best, "playing a double game."

FORTUNATELY, in that sense, people are not as vehement as their spokesmen. The foreign observer of a country, isolating a real peculiarity—in this case distrust—is in danger, by the very fact of isolating it, of exaggerating its importance. The foreigner who is neither a tourist (who may notice nothing) nor an old-established resident (who is inured to the local feelings or has himself acquired them) will be unduly irritated by the distrust in the air of Paris, as he might be by the smog in the air of London. He forgets that to the Parisian as to the Londoner this particular element in their lives may not seem very important—although at the same time it is not doing them any great good. He is apt also to take too much for granted the many instances of kindness and good humor which come his way, while magnifying the importance of the little shocks that come from what he considers an excessive wariness. But even making due allowance for such tricks of perspective a real problem remains: the problem of the waste of French talents, the loss to France and to the world, which is entailed by the unusually low degree of confidence which Frenchmen feel in one another.

This problem is of course one which can only be solved by the French themselves. Yet an outside observer may at least make a relatively shrewd guess at the areas in which progress is more, or less, likely to be made. He can guess, for example, that without an epidemic of historical amnesia, no direct action on the political plane is likely to increase confidence to any notable degree. He can guess also that the theory of each great section of Frenchmen that France can not have peace or unity unless by the triumph of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

section concerned is not likely to make any really useful contribution to harmony.

He may think that it is on the technical and the administrative level—in a broad sense—that France in recent years has made the most sustained progress and he may feel that teachers and educational officials have a greater part to play than politicians in restoring to France, not unity of belief—which is far off indeed—but a less harsh climate of controversy and somewhat more common ground. If the emphasis of French education became less exclusively intellectual one may believe that ordinary daily life and political life would become more tolerant and tolerable. Wanted: a French Dr. Arnold? Perhaps; certainly a great educational reform, and a shifting of the center of educational controversy away from the worn and pitted ground of *école laique* and *école libre*. Or perhaps better, the quiet and unobtrusive carrying out of the reforms (shorter school hours, institution of school games, less frequent reading, less official adulation of the bright, and no doubt many other changes) while leaving public controversy to its familiar stamping-ground. Conversations with teachers, parents and school children themselves seem to show that opinion is ripening for reform in this direction. If Madame Coty was a model for the parents and the mountain climber Louis Lachenal a model for the youth—as the French press suggested, and a great number of French people, moved by these deaths, most clearly felt—then France's educational system needs to be changed.

FROM THE PHILIPPINES

The Task Ahead

LUIGI G. LIGUTTI

THE speaker was a young man, with grave, ascetic features and dark, deep-set eyes. "The most important person in the Philippines," he said, "is the Filipino farmer. But look at him. His face is pale, his clothes tattered, his back bent, his feet bare. Three out of four Filipinos are farmers, and the farmer is the base of our economic pyramid. He is the foundation of our social and political structure. He is the backbone of our country. If we want to strengthen a structure we must first strengthen its foundation—if we want to strengthen an organism we must first strengthen its backbone. But in our country we have been doing the exact opposite.

"We have constantly invigorated the apex, but we have left the base to rot in stagnation. Our barrio farms are in practically the same condition as when Magellan first saw the islands in 1521; they are still in the age of the nipa hut, the carabaos and the wooden plow. Because the farmer is desperately poor, less and less people want to be farmers. For who wants to be that poor? So people leave the farms. They flock to the cities where there is overcrowding, unemployment, crime, and dissidence.

"The monster of Communism is evil and ugly. But it had the intelligence to realize that in the Philippines the surest way to conquer the people is to conquer first the peasant. And so the monster went about barefoot with the farmers, joined them at cockfights, told them that the landlord's wealth belonged to them and that the government's power was theirs. Communism chewed betelnuts with the peasants and spat red on the ground, while the lovers of freedom threw beer bottles at each other in Congress and the Christians were content to hold meetings in the parish halls and convents and to pray long novenas in the afternoons."

It was Jerry Montemayor who was speaking, a product of the Jesuit college in Manila, a family man, a devout man burning from within, and a leader of a group known as the Free Farmers. The place was the barrio of Baluto, a wretched little village made up of nipa huts, built on stilts, and located on the sandy bottom of the Bamban River. The river itself wanders all over the plain while it skirts the wooded volcanic mountain Arayat, the last hiding place of the Huks. I had come to the Philippines for the first Asian Congress of the lay apostolate, but I had managed to arrive forty-eight hours ahead of time and I lost no time in getting out of the city into critical territory. Jerry Montemayor and his fellow Free Farmers were my guides, and it is probably significant that they are hated both by Communists and by landlords. What he was saying testified to the truth about the Huks; these agrarian Communists have been defeated in battle, their chief has surrendered, but the evils that gave them birth are still there.

Sixteen nations sent delegates to the Congress. There were long speeches and short ones, many discussions and resolutions. Participating were a Cardinal, an

Rt. Rev. Monsignor Luigi G. Ligutti, executive secretary of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, is now traveling in the Far East.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Apostolic Nuncio, twenty Archbishops and Bishops, veterans from China—mostly lay people—a former Buddhist monk from Thailand, a woman convert from Pakistan, and some who could trace their Catholicity back to Apostolic times. In the course of the meetings certain things became very clear. There is diversity in Asia, but there is also unity. Many problems there are universal; the danger is at the gate, around the compound, within the very heart. Asia could go Communist piecemeal because of a failure here or blindness there. And that is why the Asian Conference, which was sponsored by Rome, was at once an inspiring and a useful one.

We gathered "intramuros" at the new auditorium of the ancient College of San Juan Letrau. We were charmed and enthused by Cardinal Gracias, a son of Karachi and now Archbishop of Bombay. A native priest from Ceylon read a magnificent paper. Dr. Sieh, a Chinese, delivered a one and one-half hour address. Monsignor Pavan of Rome expounded the theology and practice of Catholic Action. And in the workshop sessions everybody talked and talked. I left the Congress convinced that it was good for the participants to meet and get to know each other. Certainly, all gained a greater appreciation of the universality of the Church; the spirit of the Congress was enough to make us proud of our union with Rome. And we did become conscious of similar situations that exist elsewhere and of the threat behind peaceful appearances.

This Congress was, of course, only a start. There will be follow-ups. Someone has described Asia as a giant awakening from a long slumber, and the figure is strikingly apropos. Even though in a minority, Catholics and particularly the laity must help to guide the giant's course along the path of peace and progress. For Asia to fall into the abyss of self-destruction and slavery would be terrifyingly easy; we must not permit it to happen.

SHORT STORY

Church Militant

GRAHAM GREENE

AS WE drove out of the Reservation in Father Donnell's old tinpot of a jeep we passed the Archbishop in his Cadillac. It came to rest a few yards off, between the rows of coffee plants. "If we hadn't stopped for anyone after lunch," Father Donnell said, putting on his brakes, "we'd have missed him altogether." He got unwillingly out and went over to the Archbishop who sat at the wheel. The back of the car was full of women in strange grey clothes on which were sewn grey linen crosses.

Father Donnell came thoughtfully back. He said, "We can go on, but he wants us to meet him at the Niguru Mission for a chat at teatime. He's going up to my place now. I hope to God there's someone at home besides Patsy One-Eye."

"Who were those women?" I said. Father Donnell's face had dried up like an apple dumpling that had been left too long in the oven. He replied gloomily and ambiguously, "I fear the worst."

That afternoon we called on some women settlers who were living alone very courageously on the edge of the Kikuyu reserve. The shotguns in the hall, the revolvers on their laps, the big Boxer dogs couched protectively by the wired fences called to my mind what life must have been like in the early days of American colonization. Father Donnell was preoccupied. When one of the women mentioned the attack on his mission a few weeks gone, he hadn't the heart to tell a good story. "Oh, the poor fellows," he said, "they didn't know any better."

"If you hadn't had twenty yards start to the forest—"

"They've been misled," he said.

The Niguru Mission was quite a different spot from Father Donnell's tin hut on the top of a hill. Outside the Reserve, on land owned by Europeans, it had been built in less troublous times and built to last. I was reminded a little of a military barracks designed by Lutyens. The very sight of it in the distance aroused Father Donnell; he became as mischievous as a small boy from a poor home taken to see a rich and pompous relative.

"We'll pull Father Schmidt's leg," he said. "Poor man, living there with all those holy nuns, year in, year out."

"Have they had any trouble?" I asked.

"Trouble!" Father exclaimed in his house-proud accent. "They've got fifty Home Guard stuck around

---

Mr. Greene is the author of *The Power and the Glory, Brighton Rock, The End of the Affair,* and the forthcoming *The Quiet American.* Copyright 1955 by Graham Greene.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the place and if a dog so much as barks, away goes a rocket and they have the Devons shooting up the drive. What chance have the Mau Mau, poor devils, with a place like that?"

We parked the car as silently as Father Donnell's gears would permit round a corner of the Italianate chapel and went to look for Father Schmidt. In the great square of the place a nun went bustling by and Father Donnell called out to her, "Hi, Sister!"

"How are you, Father?"

"Trying to avoid me, are you? Think I've come begging for eggs, eh?"

"I just didn't see you, Father."

"Well, I've some bad news for all of you, Sister."

"Bad news? Is it General Kimathi?"

"What, that poor ignorant fellow? No, Sister. The Archbishop's descending on you all, in next to no time! In his brand new Cadillac."

"But what's he doing this way?"

"I have my fears," Father Donnell said, moving on.

We found Father Schmidt in his room. He was fast asleep on a couple of chairs, with the shutters drawn to keep the sun out; a very old man with snow white hair, very close to the last sleep of all. I wouldn't have woken him, but Father Donnell had no such scruples. "Father Schmidt, Father Schmidt!" he called.

Father Schmidt raised one thick white eyebrow. "Oh, it's you," he said, and prepared to sleep again.

"Wake up, Father. It's serious trouble we have."

Father Schmidt reluctantly put his feet on the floor. "Have they attacked you again? I heard no shots last night."

"They've done worse, Father Schmidt. They've driven away the cows and killed the chickens and we've come to beg for some of your home-made wine."

" I suppose I must give you a few bottles perhaps, but what has wine got to do with your cows?"

"O, they poisoned our well too. We've nothing to drink, Father. And we'll need six of your laborers to carry the things."

"What is wrong with your car?"

"They burnt that."

"Then how did you come here?"

"We walked all the way."

The old man shambled to his feet and made for the cupboard. The bottom shelf was full of bottles.

"We're starving, Father. We'll need all those bottles."

"They have not been filled yet. We will have to take them to the barrel."

"And bread, Father. We've used up all our bread."

Grumbling gutturally old Father Schmidt produced two loaves and half a pound of butter. "It is all I have, Father Donnell."

"And eggs."

He took three eggs out of a china dish.

"And a side of beef, Father."

"What reason would I have for keeping a side of beef? You know very well I do not eat meat. For that you must go to the Sister-in-charge. I have some biscuits. You had better sit down and eat."

I wondered how far Father Donnell would let the joke go, for there were only a very few sweet biscuits left in the tin and Father Schmidt turned away his face to hide a grimace when Father Donnell dipped a finger towards the tin.

"Look at his face," Father Donnell said. "The sweetest tooth this side of the Indian Ocean. Don't be afraid, Father. It was a little jest we were having."

Father Schmidt looked down at his big black boots and said: "Will you ever grow up, Father Donnell?"

"Ah, don't be angry, Father. I'll be as old as you one day. But I've real news for you. The Archbishop's due here any minute with a cargo of ladies."

"Ladies?"

"The Little Sisters of Charles de Foucauld."

"Haven't I got enough women in the place?"

"They don't want to have anything to do with you, Father. They want a plot in the Reserve."

"Who's going to pay for them?"

"They want to live like African women, build their own huts . . . till the ground . . . I told them I wanted nurses for a hospital, but they'll have none of that they say, except the emptying of the slops. 'Perhaps you'll teach in my school?' I said? Oh, no. They'll sweep the floors, they won't teach. I said, 'There's no room for you in my small mission,' and they said they'd take a bit of ground outside it. 'We only want half an acre,' they said. 'It belongs to the Kikuyu,' I said. 'With all this trouble, how can we ask them for land?' 'If the Lord wants us here, the Lord will give us half an acre,' they said. What can you do with women like that?"

"It's not right," Father Schmidt said. "They ought to stay in Europe."

"There's a lot of them in the North."

"The North is different. There's plenty of room for madness in the desert."

"Here's the Archbishop," Father Donnell said, as the Cadillac bumped softly in.

Father Schmidt went to greet him and Father Donnell whispered to me, "A saint if ever there was one."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"The Archbishop?"

"Of course not. Oh, he's a good man in his way, but . . ."

The Archbishop entered. His big cross lay at a slight angle over his stomach.

"How are you? How are you?" he said. "I'm very glad to meet you. It's a beautiful day for a ride if it wasn't for the state of the roads. I like to get out of the city, and the Sisters were a good excuse. No, I won't have a cup of tea, thank you. Just one of these sweet biscuits, thank you, thank you. The Sisters are looking after my ladies and showing them the chapel and then we must be off. I like to get back before it's very late in these dangerous days. Oh, thank you, thank you, but I seem to be eating them all up, when I really just wanted to explain about my ladies. They're French, Father, like you."

"I'm no more French," Father Schmidt said, "than you're English."

"Ah, touché, touché," the Archbishop said with a genial laugh. His bonhomie was continuous. I was reminded of a cheer-leader at a football match.

"What do they want here?" Father Schmidt said.

"Well, you know how it is with the Sisters of Charles de Foucauld. They want a bit of land and to work like the natives."

"These parts are unsuitable for women," Father Schmidt said.

"That's why they want to be here. It's their vocation." The Archbishop brushed some crumbs off his waistcoat and said: "I've given them one plot in the city at Moragumbi."

"But that is a terrible place," Father Schmidt said. "That was where they dug up those strangled bodies. Their throats will all be cut," he added accusingly.

"It's their vocation, Father, it's their vocation. You are too materialist. We all of us have our vocation. You and me and Father Donnell. One mustn't interfere with a vocation."

"Fifty-five years ago I remember a novice master who didn't believe in encouraging a vocation."

"I'm not dealing with novices, Father. It's as I said, you are too materialist, living here comfortably with all these Sisters to look after you."

"They will not stay alive a month. Who will look after *them?*"

"They'll look after themselves, Father."

"They are women," Father Schmidt said sadly and wistfully.

The Archbishop took Father Donnell out into the shadowy square "to meet the ladies properly." He walked jauntily, like a leader: there was no question about his vocation either.

Father Schmidt sat silent over his empty tin of sweet biscuits. Once he shook his head at his own thoughts.

I wondered how I could cheer him. I was an outsider, a visiting journalist. I said, "These empty bottles in your cupboard . . ."

He raised his old eyes.

I said, "If we loaded half a dozen in the back of Father Donnell's jeep, then when he drives off there'll be such a clatter. . . . I don't know what the Archbishop will think."

Father Schmidt rose. "It is a very good idea." He stumped in his big boots towards the cupboard. The Archbishop was talking earnestly to Father Donnell. Neither of them saw us laden with the bottles. Father Schmidt took up a position between me and them, straddling with his legs, making a curtain of his soutane, while I laid the bottles in the bottom of the jeep. Then we went back to where the Archbishop, surrounded by the non-comprehending French faces of his ladies, was having his last word with Father Donnell.

"At a time like this," Father Donnell said, "we can't ask the poor creatures for even half an acre. It's wrong."

"It's to help a vocation."

"How can you expect the Kikuyu to understand that? They'll think we are stealing the land. And aren't we stealing it?"

"For God, Father."

"I thought God owned the land already. Without us." He got angrily into his jeep and I followed him. "Goodbye, Your Excellency."

"Goodbye, Father. Just think about it. I'm sure you'll come round to my opinion."

"Goodbye, Father Schmidt."

"Goodbye, Father Donnell."

He drove off and the bottles merrily clinked and clanked, but looking back I could see no sign that the Archbishop had heard, nor had Father Donnell. He bumped onwards into the Reserve lost in thought. I had to turn on the lights myself. The noise of our progress made me uneasy in the growing darkness. I was still unused to this world of ambush. I said, "Don't you think. . . these bottles. . . ."

"Bottles?"

"They are so noisy. If the Mau Mau—" I tried nervously to suggest.

"Poor fellows," Father Donnell said. "How could we ever make them understand. . . .?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE SCREEN

SEE HOW THEY RUN

AT the end of the year the reviewer can get as personal as he wants and choose the ten movies that he likes best. Nobody but nobody can push him into preferences; and he doesn't have to please any audience. And the idea of "ten bests" is a very good one: it gives readers a chance to see exactly where a reviewer stands, and they can compare their preferences with his. Someone suggested, more or less seriously, that for variety I name the ten worst films of the year. The trouble with this idea is that it is too easy, and it also implies I've seen all the year's bad films—which I haven't. I suppose I could name the ten most disappointing movies of the year, but these all turn out to be elaborate productions like "Oklahoma!" and "Guys and Dolls" and "Mister Roberts" whose main errors were bigness and loss of *joie de vivre* when they were transferred to over-sized screens. So what follows is my choice of the ten best, arranged in order of preference.

Marty—because Delbert Mann fashioned Paddy Chayefsky's screenplay about a Bronx butcher into the most heart-warming movie of the year, and because Ernest Borgnine and Betsy Blair in the leads and a wonderful supporting cast gave practically flawless performances as real people beset with problems that concern us all, especially the problem of loneliness.

Bad Day at Black Rock—because it was the best outdoor picture of the year and a worthy successor to "High Noon" and "Shane" in saying that a man must stand up for his convictions; and because of John Sturges' splendid direction of a fine cast with Spencer Tracy fighting racial discrimination and other evils represented by Robert Ryan as the town's dictator.

The Prisoner—because Alec Guinness and Jack Hawkins gave first-rate performances as Cardinal and Interrogator in Bridget Boland's stimulating script that is sort of a modern morality play about the conflict between Church and Totalitarian State; and because of this English film's great charity toward all men.

East of Eden—in spite of its artiness, Elia Kazan's direction made a very moving film out of the last part of John Steinbeck's long novel, a film that effectively used WarnerColor CinemaScope and a good cast, including the late James Dean.

The Divided Heart—because this English film handled superbly a true story that could have become mawkish in telling of a little boy who had to decide between his two mothers, played with tender reserve by Cornell Borchers as the German mother who adopted and rehabilitated him, and Yvonne Mitchell as his real mother, a Slovene from whom he was taken.

The Rose Tattoo—although Tennessee Williams' script leaves much to be desired, Anna Magnani's performance as the distraught widow obsessed by sex and her late husband's infidelity is the year's best and could well stand as one of the greatest throughout the years.

The Great Adventure—a Swedish documentary, directed with extraordinary beauty and without sentiment by Arne Sucksdorff who skillfully photographed the wonders of nature and childhood on a farm.

Summertime—the beauties of Venice photographed in Eastman color and well integrated into a story about a lonely and confused American abroad, nicely played by Katharine Hepburn.

It's Always Fair Weather—because it caught what too many Hollywood musicals are missing these days: a spirit of lightness and gaiety; and because its satire on three war buddies who get together ten years later was good fun to which the dancing of Gene Kelly, Dan Dailey and Michael Kidd contributed a great deal.

Diabolique—although this French film is too far steeped in evil to be entertaining, Henri-Georges Clouzot proves again that he knows more about cinema than most directors in the business; very few movies of the year have the impact of this unholy thriller.

So much for 1955. No doubt your list will have additions to and subtractions from mine; but let's all hope movies in 1956 do much better and that movie makers learn how to use their large screens and new techniques; and let them remember, with all their decorations, that the play's the thing.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

DARKNESS AND DEVILS

MR. Eddie Dowling's production of the Abbey Theatre success, "The Righteous Are Bold," by the Irish dramatist Frank Carney, is most distinguished and interesting indeed: the play somewhat naive and provincial in texture, perhaps, but of a constant spiritual audacity and vehemence which always compel and rise on occasion to the terrible coloring of the subject. That subject is diabolic possession, to which Mr. Carney has given a certain bleak thrust and relief by setting his play in the trackless mountain country of the west of Ireland: a world in which earth and air and water are hard, pitiless and spare. A young girl has returned from England in disturbing circumstances. She gives evidence of some exhaustion of soul, of being deeply, inexplicably harrowed: a dark taunting violence flows out of her at the touch or smell or thought of her family's pieties. She is mastered by fearful rages,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and by mesmeric phantasies in which she speaks fluently in other languages. Only gradually is the truth revealed: that she has in the past carelessly permitted herself to be used as a spiritualistic medium, and is now possessed by some foul thing beyond the reach of time, and with its own malignant potency.

The world of dark spirit, then, clawing hideously at mortality is Mr. Carney's theme: his play rides the high crest of the world, flanked by the poles of heaven and hell. Poetry alone, or music perhaps, could make its full burden tolerable: one asks for a graver draughtsmanship, more severe, apocalyptic almost, than is found in "The Righteous Are Bold." Mr. Carney is not a poet, yet not this absence alone denies his play its full passionate authority: what settles so greedily on "The Righteous Are Bold" is that gray provincialism which blights, like some indestructible pest, most contemporary Irish drama. One has the sense, moving into these claustral kitchens and parlors, of being the silent witness to a family quarrel acrimoniously and remorselessly sustained. Crockery flies pell-mell about one's head: fathers terrorize their sons: children are in a sterile revolt against the dead weight of custom: mothers tremble as the household gods are threatened: an impoverished rationalism tilts stridently against an overweening piety, and everywhere the old wounds are fondled and inflamed—poverty, clerical domination, the denied life of the senses. This vast stream of indignation flows bitterly through Mr. Carney's drama, and the playwright churns it violently. Yet indignation is at best a fruitless emotion, and the particular tedium of the contemporary Irish drama lies in the lack of proportion, of moral equilibrium and finely graduated response being brought to bear in these troubled areas of national feeling. I call this attitude provincial, and I am reminded by it of a similar situation in our own drama of the Twenties: there, too, one could observe a national critical consciousness in the process of development, and there, too, the colors were harsh and bold, the lighting lurid. What checks this insular habit of mind most effectively, and dries up such moldy patches of self-obsession, is precisely some cool, fresh wind from the great world of art and life and thought: and it is just this which the Irish theater seems insistently to have been denied.

Yet provincialism has its virtues, and it is these which I would now, somewhat tardily, wish to stress: for, all Mr. Carney's peripheral social anxieties notwithstanding, one has the sense in "The Righteous Are Bold" of being directly at the center of significant experience. The reality of spirit, malignant and benign, is created boldly by the dramatist, and compels an unquestioning assent. The local color of "The Righteous Are Bold" may be trivial, but its theme springs in a powerful trajectory of passion, brushing heaven and hell, and penetrating deeply the bruised heart of the world. One has only to consider some of our own nervous domestications of spiritual terror to realize how singular an achievement this is.

And part of this excellence is owing, doubtless, to the players, all of whom, I might add, speak a liquid and musical language. Mr. Denis O'Dea, in a role all intensity and little relief, gives a performance of great dignity and considerable power. The last of the original Abbey Players, Mr. P. J. Kelly, is pungent and delightful in a character sketch which lovingly echoes the grandeur of the past. Mr. Liam Gannon plays the lover with much charm and real feeling. The possessed girl is played by Miss Irene Hayes, a young actress of lyrical Irish beauty and spirit. Miss Hayes creates the desperate victim of the first act with wonderful depth and variety, and if the demonic malignity of the play's later passages is somewhat beyond her present technique and insight, that should not disturb us: the part is fantastically difficult. "The Righteous Are Bold" is an uneven drama of various merits, but the central fact remains that it shares a kind of concern, and explores a range of experience, that are totally rare in our theater. (*At the Holiday.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

"CATHOLICS AND ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM"

Montreal, Can.

TO the Editors: Thank you for printing Bishop Wright's apology for "the wild, living intellect of man" [December 16]. The first step towards the solution of any problem is to recognize the existence of the problem. Articles such as this indicate that we are, at long last, beginning to see the problem. In the past few years a new cry has been raised within our university and seminary walls: "What's the use of all these far-fetched ideas in Thomism? What practical value does such or such a principle have? How is this or that point of doctrine going to help us in life?" We are geared by everything in our society to an over-emphasis of the concrete. Our students who aspire towards leadership want most of all to be practical men.

But it isn't by being practical that we will resolve the problem of the modern world. The world has had too many practical men; what we need now is men of vision and pure intellectual caliber. Chesterton, with his usual good humor and clarity, exposed the fallacy of the practical man in these words: "To put in order the disordered state of modern society the practical man cannot be counted on; the practical man cannot be expected to improve the impracticable

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

muddle for he cannot clear the muddle in his own mind. For truly the man who walks the labyrinthine ways of today must have a clear set of principles; he must have a deeply-rooted philosophy."

To give in to the temptation of "abridging" our philosophy or of "practicalizing" our intellectual heritage would be suicidal in the present age. It must be guarded with a kind of supernatural jealousy but brought nevertheless to bear on the modern situation. We must seek new outlets of expression, but we must always express the same thing. A Catholic lives in two worlds; in reality it is one and the same world. The mission of the Catholic intellectual is not to establish any kind of compromise with the modern world, but to draw that world into the realm of his own ideals and philosophy. If he succeeds in being this kind of . . . witness, grace will do the rest.

BERNARD G. MURCHLAND, C.S.C.

"THE CASE OF EZRA POUND"

Newark, Del.

TO the Editors: I think the solution to the Ezra Pound case is quite clear, though Mr. Hynes has apparently missed seeing it [December 9]. It lies in a statement that appears in his article: "In the two cases most similar to Pound's—those of Robert Best and Douglas Chandler, who broadcast for Germany—sentences of life imprisonment were given, and were upheld on appeal."

Certainly, Pound is to be admired for his integrity as a poet—even awarded prizes, if his poetry is worthy of them—but for his acts of treason, he should be imprisoned. If Mr. Best and Mr. Chandler were poets, should they have received better treatment than they did? Mr. Pound's artistic integrity should have no more effect on the question of his loyalty to his country than the professional integrity of the two who made broadcasts for Germany. To paraphrase Shakespeare's Brutus: As he had integrity, I honor him; but as he was a traitor, I should punish him. I agree with Mr. Hynes that the government is avoiding the issue in considering Pound insane.

L. M. MANHEIM.

"THE AGE OF DISCUSSION"

Baltimore, Maryland

TO the Editors: Mr. John Holt [December 9] accused the Conservative of saying little or nothing about our modern society and suggests that the day a Conservative realizes that General Motors and not the C.I.O. is the real anti-Conservative institution will be the beginning of hope for the Conservative movement. As to whether or not the Conservative is a General Motors director playing the theme of economic liberalism I suggest that our "converted" Conservative read the works of the man who he thinks is the modern counterpart of Don Quixote. In the *Program for Conservatives* Mr. Russell Kirk says: "Conservatism is simply not a defense of 'capitalism,' the abstraction of Marx."

It must be noted that political conservatism is not the historic offspring of economic individualism. Yesterday's liberal is not to-day's conservative. "What is good for G.M. is good for America" is not the statement of a conservative, but that of a "has been" liberal who still thinks like an early liberal with the *Wealth of Nations* tucked under his arm as he rides to the office with thoughts of preserving wealth and not conserving man's liberty. As Mr. Kirk goes on to say: "The majority of conservatives, in every country, always have been men of slender means and obscure station. These conservatives are not devoted primarily to 'free competition' or 'the American standard of living,' valuable though those possessions may be. What gives the true conservative his strength in our time of troubles is his belief in a moral order which joins all classes in a common purpose, and through which men may live in justice and liberty." The Conservative insists on the moral order as the weapon of combating the evils of modern society. Man cannot control the machines he makes, if he cannot control his passion.

Unlike some liberals the conservative does not promise perfection in society, for the conservative takes Original Sin as a fact. The problem is not inventing bigger and better plans in which man attempts to be just to all, but ends by being unjust. Who seeks 'final justice' more than a Marxist, but his justice is an abstraction when one considers the slave labor camps, etc.

The conservative attempts to live his philosophy (it should be noted that Conservatism considers religion essential to man and not an emotional up-lift on Sunday). He practices being just to the corner butcher and does not 'talk' about a plan of absolute justice for all men as soon as they conjure up a way to get rid of "selling."

In short, I am a different breed of conservative from what Mr. Holt was. However, if the label *conservatism* is to mean anything, let the conservative define it. Mr. Kirk has laid the groundwork for a system of modern philosophical conservatism and one thing is sure—conservatism does not mean the preservation of wealth by economic liberalism; being anti-individualistic, it cannot oppose the voluntary association of men into vocational groups; being anti-collectivistic it cannot support the elevation of the mass over the person. I invite Mr. Holt to consider Conservatism as Mr. Kirk defines it, not in the letter but the spirit. . . .

R. J. GERSTUNG.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Limits of Art

ANTHONY BAILEY

THERE are some writers who, in one sudden flash of particular insight, provide us with a remark that can be applied with equal effect to other subjects. W. B. Yeats was one of these, and his comment on John Synge—"he did not speak to men and women, asking judgment . . . but knowing himself part of judgment he was silent"—is such a statement. We can use it, for other people, for praise or blame. Wyndham Lewis is a writer who has asked for, even demanded judgment, not only as a writer, but as a painter, whose art has always carried some polemical burden. It has been his business to shock, to persuade, to convince, and not always by the rules certain critics in both fields consider conducive to the greatest expression. Fearing melodrama, these critics distrust the dramatic. Afraid of propaganda, they place a premium on ineloquence.

Now Mr. Lewis has never really appreciated that point of view. For the last forty years he has been in the vanguard of numerous attacks on the established literary, artistic, or social-political order. He said of Messrs. Eliot, Joyce, Pound, and himself in 1937, "we are the first men of a future that has not materialized," though, he might have added, we are doing our best. Indeed he was first in many things, and, we could say, often too much so. From a general point of view, his sense of timing has never been impeccable. He has always seemed to say "I told you so" at the very occasion of his first warning: his pamphlets on Hitler and the fashionable cults of the primitive and the Negro affected most of his readers in this way. And though, even in retrospect, we may still disagree with him, there has always been a violent spontaneity which could produce great work as well as propaganda. *Tarr,* a comic masterpiece, can be set against *Paleface.* Moreover, it has been a spontaneity none the less genuine for being controlled. "Beauty is difficult." Energy has to be controlled, and the prophet, even in Mr. Lewis's fields, has to define his prophecy, set down the omens within a promising form. That Mr. Lewis has done this, at least in the field of painting, is certainly self-evident. Eric Newton says of him in his fine introduction to the Faber collection of Mr. Lewis's paintings and drawings: "There are plenty of young artists who steal freely from the Lewis of 1920, and still look furiously up to date. There are a dozen more who use idioms derived from him without knowing from whence they came."

There are many reasons why Mr. Lewis has remained for so long a prophet without honor, especially in England where Ph.D. students find less sympathetic response for contemporary explication. What we see, clearly in the paintings, is an incisive quality, derived not only from the hard textures, the metallic objects, but from the essential sharpness of his "vision." The richness of the later prose camouflages this biting edge, but does not blunt it. In fact there is nothing catholic about Wyndham Lewis's view of life as we view it in his art or writing. There is not the largeness we might associate with M. Malraux. Instead there is this often sardonic exploring blade of observation and opinion which drives him, sometimes mercilessly, deep into the human condition. Nor is there—and this again renders him somewhat antipathetic to his time—any of that "compassion" so many reviewers and readers appear to demand from modern art or writing. Coupled with all this, Mr. Lewis has been, and to some extent remains, in his own words, one who has "pushed at all times to the limit of extremism in both paint and prose." What a conventional stumbling block this can be is easily discovered by reading the first jagged sixty pages of *Tarr,* or glancing at a design he did for *Timon of Athens* (1914).

In fact Mr. Lewis, perhaps more than any other much-published living author, deserves the serious critical consideration that he has only recently come to enjoy. He has said things that no one else has had either the wit or the courage to say. And it is because he has just said a few more of these things, demanding judgment, that it is necessary to cut short more general comment.

THESE new statements will be found in *The Demon of Progress In The Arts**. To put it as simply as possible, his concern in this book is largely with the limits of art; the limit, as he says, beyond which there is nothing. And if we can see these matters at all objectively—one limit always existing in the mind of

*THE DEMON OF PROGRESS IN THE ARTS. By Wyndham Lewis. Regnery. $3.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the artist—it is a timely concern. There is no doubt but that Mr. Lewis will be called the usual names, and that as usual he will be misread. He has that violence and that arrogance which tend to create such corollaries. Magazine artists feel no need to defend their art; indeed, it is rarely attacked. But the very highbrow painters (whose work often fails to reveal any profound investigation of the subject) will defend themselves rigorously against any writer, even if he is also a painter of proven stature, who tells them where they meet the cheesecake artist on the latter's grounds. The "contemporary" becomes, in one sense, a "hurrah" word. It has a whole *snobisme* attached to it. Of course extremism has a glamor, a youthful glamor. As Mr. Lewis says, "to promise that something will be 'contemporary' is like an assurance of unfailing youth"; and it has a corresponding vanity. As a man searching for The Waters of Life is not really making progress, so the extremist, the man standing on the very margin of coherence, is often quite stationary.

From one aspect, this extremist artist we have in mind is unfortunate, not because he is without talent, because the contrary is quite often true, but because he is too free. "Freedom" is a word susceptible to a variety of definitions and connotations, but in the sense in which Mr. Lewis uses it, it is conditioned by such factors as the multiplication of talented artists in a semi-Philistine society, a society which imposes almost no demand on him as to what sort of picture he should paint. This seems, as Mr. Lewis is quick to point out, an ideal situation only on the surface. In fact, it creates a compulsion to remain free, which is not "freedom." Mr. Lewis blames this heterogeneity of art in our time on no black-and-white causes. He would be foolish to do so. But he does say that "the turning point was political; the age of the political revolution was followed by the era of perpetual revolution in the arts. Halfway through the last century the revolutionary zest, the turmoil of schools, the roaring of slogans and watch-words began to assume a crazy intensity. But at present, halfway through the twentieth century, revolution, of a visual kind, appears to have become stabilized at a point which it is as far as it is possible to go technically, without disappearing altogether—without the visual arts committing suicide." He adds, "there are several abstract schools on the continent which the slightest push would tip over into the blankness of the great zero."

There are various elements here that clamor for discussion—the causes, the ways in which the plastic arts differ in this matter from the other art forms, the decline of the professional artist—and Mr. Lewis deals with most of them with great skill. At his least satisfying he is still provocative. Other less explicit factors are the vested interests in Modern Art, the institutions, the Academy of Extremism, and what Mr. Lewis calls the "pundit-prophets." No artist-writer will ever be able to discuss these with general approval. But at the center of the whole discussion is this question of freedom, the autonomy of art, the social function of the artist. And here Mr. Lewis states his own case clearly:

> The absurd things that are happening in the visual arts at present are what must happen when an art becomes totally disconnected from society, when it no longer has any direct function in life, and can only exist as the plaything of the intellect.

THUS he takes issue with critics like Sir Herbert Read, who in *Art and Society* stated "Art, I shall maintain, is an autonomous activity . . . as a mode of knowledge at once its own reality and its own end." He *seems* to take the side of the social realist or of the Marxist who requires an art informed by the same issues that inform his desired unified society, who wants, as John Berger has put it, a socially integrated tradition of art. But, as Mr. Berger has so fairly pointed out, all societies limit in some way what they will recognize in the arts, and our present limitations depend not so much on blindness as on a hypocritical tolerance.

We have no need to go to the other extreme and say that society has to share the same beliefs or own a common purpose; I suppose the greatest periods of art have been those that shared a search for similar values rather than those that owned a common purpose. It is a subtle distinction, but one which divides the Renaissance from the Middle Ages, and Greece from Rome. One could talk about "freedom" in reference to all of them and mean at least two different things. In one sense art is always autonomous in that the act of creation itself is only open to the discovery of what caused it or what went into it *after* it has occurred; in another sense it is always

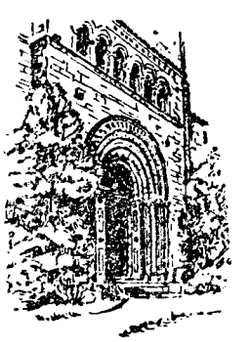
CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

Chestnut Hill
Pennsylvania

Conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph

Approved by the Association of American Universities.

For further information write to the Registrar.



Prospective students should make early application

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dependent on a social situation, on a certain time and place and on the artist's position within that frame of reference.

Right now, and this is Mr. Lewis's major complaint, the pendulum seems to have swung a long way in one direction, where statements like Mr. Read's appear at once appropriate and just. Yet art is not totally disconnected; we know that such statements can be made only because society allows it, perhaps by reason of its own despair, by virtue of the (often) unreality of life. At such a time it is necessary that men like Wyndham Lewis speak out. They have something important to say. The pendulum has to be kept swinging, not left stationary at one end of its swing.

It is instructive to examine how some of our present masters have tackled the problem, to watch men like Henry Moore or Georges Braque, or—without that status—Americans like Max Weber or Charles Sheeler struggle on a middle ground because they know how far they can go before they reach the limit. If it is true that the best painting of our time has been done somewhere near the limit, it is equally true of poetry, and admits of no static view of the matter. The problem of technique is only without limit in so far as it is connected with the problem of the subject—that perhaps is where the real disconnection occurs—and it is the problem of the subject in our time that remains yet to be solved.

Wyndham Lewis brings us back once again to all this, though on another tack, in a section he calls "The Errors of Malraux." M. Malraux holds ground in some ways similar to that of Mr. Read. Art becomes for him a rival of life, an absolute even greater than life in one respect, in that it furnishes a release from Fate. But this transcendence can take place only with the materials life itself provides, in fact only by art illustrating life. M. Malraux himself showed us this in *La Condition Humaine,* where he exploited the Chinese Communist rebellion of 1929 to make clear his view of fate and human destiny. We ought to note that a political attitude and an artistic gesture are two different things, although the most valid artistic gesture does spring from an attitude which absorbs all of life. Yet, in the last analysis, the visual arts lack what the political attitude enforced possesses, the ability to make or destroy values.

Indeed art, to be talked of, valued, even created, has to be considered in terms of life and of society, not in terms of itself, as an entity complete and autonomous, as an absolute. Art is no absolute and it is one of the mistakes of the present age that we tend to see it as such. It is here, as it was with the politics of the late Thirties explored and exploded in the *Revenge for Love*, that Wyndham Lewis can be of great service. This time, having to some extent less commitment, we should not be so prejudiced as either to ignore him or disdain him.

And Ever the Twain Shall Meet

THE HONORABLE PICNIC. By Thomas Raucat. Translated by Leonard Cline. Decorations by Lorraine Combs. Viking. $3.50.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

FOR the sake of convenience we might say that the motif of the Western Barbarian in Asia owes its vogue to two postwar master-mentors, Messrs. Michaux and Michener; that the former's East is a probing satyr's, the latter's an earthy paradise with a dash of bitters, which he doesn't quest but manages to sneak up on; that these approaches have initiated two trends which may serve to distinguish one barbarian-dealer from another. *The Honorable Picnic,* by Frenchman Thomas Raucat, saw its first American publication a good twenty years before the deluge; as a classic it stands beyond either of these trends.

Plot conceit is practically invisible, though machination abounds. The scene is Tokyo in summer, 1922, and the likely center of the imbroglio is a foppish Swiss diplomat on an "important mission," which ten per cent of the time consists of compiling a learned study of the coleoptera for the League of Nations, the rest in pursuing, as undiplomatically as possible, a more interesting kimono-clad species. Since this gentleman's weakness is the entire, happily endowed ten per cent of young Japanese womanhood, it takes no small effort on his part to be single-minded at the drop of a fan. Even more challenging is the fact that Japanese girls at eighteen consider themselves already in the decline of life—possibly due to the national custom of counting one year as two. Nothing daunted, the seducer sets out for the resort island of Enoshima, determined to consummate an idyl he has arranged, in a lofty fashion worthy of star-crossed lovers, with a girl of precisely eighteen. In a desperate effort to salvage "face" for the anti-hero he has already witheringly ticked off, the best the author can offer is an avowal that only a careerist would concern himself with the distaff European colony anyway.

The Japanese idea of an outing being something nearer an expedition, the complications are not of the most romantic, and our bland "foreign lord" has a bad time on Enoshima. The idyl which was to be runs afoul of national honor and racial dignity, dissolving into a pretext for casual thrust and parry between East and West, and a comedy of logical deductions ensues. With an omnivorous tongue in cheek the writer yields the nar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rative to assorted local bystanders, who, after chatting innocuously about their own little problems, fix their politely rounded gaze on the peregrinations of the indecorous foreign heathen, whom they damn with excessive gentility. (They are all of that oriental breed that holds an ace concealed in their extravagant humility.) All that remains is for the authorities to tag the occidental as an agent for woman's suffrage.

Until the last chapter M. Raucat has acted with rare control as an emphatically Gallic arbiter, while his prospect vacillated with dazzling continuity all the way from a Jamesian level to one of pure situation farce; but here he appears to be retooling his devices to redeem some of the mischief—or, rather, to "redeem" the Japanese in our eyes (only he fails to return the compliment). At this point he is like a master of *ad lib* falling into *non sequitur*. This chapter, whose melancholy charm is that of a nocturnal serenade, is in discord with all that has gone before in so rich a vein of humor. To be sure, he has pricked the deathless schizmatic elements in relations between Western and Eastern man; yet this he has not done as a moral satirist. What he has to say directly about comparative nobility is therefore less than vital.

M. Raucat's good-natured, even sometimes complacent, caricature feeds on every trifle in the European or Japanese composition that could be mutually mistaken for aberration; to this end he seizes every prop in sight. Yet however broad the burlesque it never narrows the scope; even the hilarious slapstick of "Geisha-girl" turns out to be a pretty erudite barb. Of course at times the writer is enjoying himself so overtly he compromises chances the persons through whom he narrates might have to toss off some little *bon mot* strictly their own. In this respect he is more witticist than wit.

No doubt one should bow to the superior motives of many *literati* currently seeking to improve our understanding of the East: we ought to see ourselves as others see us; but then it can be more purgative to laugh at ourselves as others do. M. Raucat's enormous success in being funny about the misunderstandings, together with his subtler success in thereby increasing at least our knowledge, suggests it couldn't be as much fun to understand. And readers will not be dismayed at learning nothing about the coleoptera.

The Recurring Dilemma

THE TRAIL OF THE DINOSAUR AND OTHER ESSAYS. By Arthur Koestler. Macmillan. $3.50.

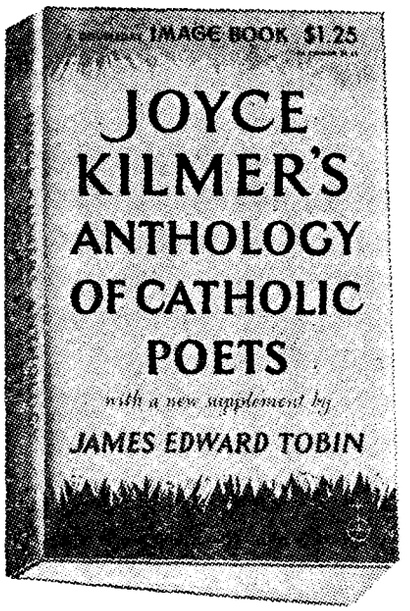
By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

IT will probably be Arthur Koestler's fate that he will be remembered for his novel *Darkness at Noon* more than anything else. Koestler the Zionist, Koestler the psychologist, Koestler the moralist—these all give way before Koestler, the premature anti-Stalinist, the sophisticated, incisive analyst of the purge trials. For when the imperative necessity of teaching the intellectuals the truth about Stalinism had merged almost into its opposite, into an indiscriminate anti-Stalinism, Koestler wrote, "In 1952, at the age of 47 years, I returned to England, and bought a house in one of London's old squares, in which I shall live happily ever after, until the Great Mushroom appears in the skies."

This wistful, elegaic note of purposelessness is heard in Mr. Koestler's new collection of essays. At the very outset, he informs us that "This book, then, is a farewell to arms. The last essays and speeches in it that deal directly with political questions date from 1950, and are now five years old. Since then I felt that I have said all that I had to say on these questions. . . ." We do not, of course, believe this for a moment, since a man like Mr. Koestler could no sooner live out of politics than

DOUBLEDAY
IMAGE BOOKS
"...making the world's finest Catholic literature available to all..."

Featured this month . . .



The finest collection of modern Catholic poets—new, revised edition

Joyce Kilmer's widely-read and acclaimed anthology of outstanding Catholic poets is now brought up to date with a brand new supplement by James Edward Tobin, distinguished scholar in the field of English and Catholic literature. This extensive new supplement covers nearly half a century of Catholic authors and includes many poems never before in book form. G. K. Chesterton, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Thomas Merton, Francis Thompson, and others of comparable literary stature, are represented. Available only in this deluxe pocket-size Image Book, at $1.25.

Buy Image Books
Read Image Books
Give Image Books

DOUBLEDAY IMAGE BOOKS
575 Madison Ave., N.Y. 22

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

In changing subscription address, please cut out and return the label from the wrapper in which a recent copy of The Commonweal reached you. Allow three weeks for a new address to become effective. Circulation Dept., The Commonweal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out of air. And the doubt is reinforced by the last essay in the book—and the most recently written—which is about politics.

Yet there is a meaning in Mr. Koestler's constant adieus, his settling down in 1952, his farewell to arms in 1955, the repeated tone of resignation. In Stalinism, Mr. Koestler had a faith, and that carried him up almost to the end of the Thirties; in anti-Stalinism, Mr. Koestler had a faith, and that was dynamic up until the late Forties. And now Koestler has no faith; yet he wants, he needs, faith desperately. Thus it is that the last essay, "The Trail of the Dinosaur," is about politics *and* religion—an uninstitutional, undogmatic kind of religion, to be sure, but religion, nevertheless. Logically, Mr. Koestler should resign himself (thus all the farewells); emotionally, he cannot.

And the specific form of the problem which torments him appears on the first page of the first essay (which was written in 1947); it is the coda of the last piece in the book (1955). Mr. Koestler writes of "the eternal predicament of man, the tragic conflict inherent in his nature. It is the conflict between expediency and morality. I shall try to show that this conflict is at the root of our political and social crisis, that it contains in a nutshell the challenge of our time." "Expediency and morality": previously, Mr. Koestler had named these terms as Commissar and Yogi, he had generalized them into a historical theory (his theory of levels in *Darkness at Noon*), he had expressed them as a psychological insight, "the hypertrophy of self-asserting drives with a corresponding decline of the self-transcending drives," but always the effect was the same, the question resolved itself down to a conflict of expediency and morality.

To solve his dilemma, Koestler adopted an *ad hoc* formula "that the End only justifies the Means within narrow limits." By this, he escaped the utopianism of the Yogi (the End never justifies the Means) and the amorality of the Commissar (the End always justifies the Means). He rigged a tight-rope for human freedom between the extremes of "vivisection" and "anti-vivisection morality." In the essays collected in this new book he attempts to walk it.

But there is one major problem with this solution, a problem that persists throughout *The Trail of the Dinosaur*: it is in violent conflict with Mr. Koestler's own personality. Some middle-aging logical positivist professor in a provincial English university might be able to maintain this position, but not Arthur Koestler. His need for faith, for something absolute, keeps reasserting itself and bursting through the formula with a tremendous discontent. And it is because of this fact that this book ends with a hope for a new religion, for a miracle, for a sudden change in man. Once the faith in Stalinism and the faith in anti-Stalinism were gone, what remained? In *The Trail of the Dinosaur*, you will find many answers, some glibly, some brilliantly, put; but all of them add up to the same thing—to a tremendous void, an aching, a hope without an object.

Ironic Sketches

ADAM, WHERE ART THOU? By Heinrich Boll. Criterion. $3.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

WITH some of Ernest Hemingway's simplicity and clarity, Heinrich Böll writes several vignettes about a segment of the German army as it disintegrates in World War II under the Russian advance into Hungary. His stories at times separate into dry and toneless fragments, but often they come together magnetized in some fierce, ironic little catastrophe. A young, frightened corporal at a partially evacuated German hospital goes out into the garden with a Red Cross flag to meet the Russian tanks; he trips on a buried dud bomb, which explodes, kills him, and alarms the Russians into demolishing the defenseless hospital. An efficient engineering officer, by encouraging his men with friendship rather than with fear, gets a bridge rebuilt two days ahead of schedule, just in time to blow it up as the Russians arrive.

Such ironic catastrophes have been the substance of many war stories; they are preserved from staleness here by Mr. Böll's pure honesty and his wry casualness.

Mr. Böll's adjectives are mainly descriptive, seldom highly charged; he is almost anti-emphatic at times. In some places his economies work perfectly. There is a story about a van full of people arriving at a guarded camp, in which he manages even a fresh morning scene with mist lying upon the countryside and smoke rising from the chimneys of the crematorium. After that the implicit horror shows its face briefly and is then shut off.

In this book, first published in Germany in 1951, Mr. Böll's effectiveness is uneven because he does not share Mr. Hemingway's brilliant singleness of tone or attack. A later novel, not about the war, was published here by Henry Holt in 1954 as *Acquainted with the Night*—an unusual, compassionate story about a man and a woman with worlds of misery on their shoulders— a story which was firmly unified by an implicit religious point of view. Its English title suggests the suffering of Christ, and in German its title was an equivalent of "And He never said a mumbling word." This later work tells of a kind of dumb mortal *patience* that could renew the face of the earth.

Adam, Where Art Thou? does not probe so deeply. Mr. Böll at best attempts to unify its scenes with a vision of senselessness; but that is a vision of nothing. Pieces at the edge of a crumbling mosaic, these sketches do not offer an intuition of a total pattern, because the author keeps his several characterizations and flashbacks rigidly personal and local. His characters here are ordinary, most of them mediocre. They do not think about any large meanings, and they represent no national conscience— thus is Mr. Böll true to his craft. One character is a Catholic Jewish girl who says, "We must pray in order to console God." But the Heinrich Böll of this earlier group of stories gives no further intimations of a positive vision.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Way to Sanctity

THE NUN. By Margaret Trouncer. Sheed & Ward. $3.50.

By DORIS GRUMBACH

IN June 1670 the coach from Charolles was traveling through the French spring countryside. Inside, a Benedictine monk, Dom Jean Bouzitat, and a kindly missionary, Père Louis, rode beside a young girl and her brother. The talk turned to religious orders; the young man told the two priests his sister was on her way to Paray to be interviewed for admittance. Worldly, fat Dom Bouzitat, warming to his subject, warned the young woman against "an excess of zeal," advised her to keep to the Rule with "great moderation." Her reply was a query, simple and definitive for the career ahead of Margaret Mary Alacoque:

"But surely," she asked the Benedictine, "love should know no limits?"

Fresh from twenty-two years of unbelievable domestic hell—the details of Margaret Mary's tortures by her relatives who were part she-devils and part folk-lore witches, at times strains even the staunchest will to believe—the young postulant heard her first voice as she stepped inside the door of the Visitation convent: "It is Here that I want thee." From that moment on she stayed, allowing her love to know no limits until death freed her to perpetual sanctity.

Miss Trouncer's book (she calls it a novel but it proceeds much more in the mode of biography) is a feelingly written life of St. Margaret Mary, beginning with her early trials as an unwanted child, taking her into religious life, and following the horrendous reappearance, in Visitation garb, of her old familial demons. The story comes to a gruesome climax on the night of the twentieth of November, 1677, when a group of possessed and vicious nuns with an excessive repugnance to the zeal of the young visionary (by this time Margaret Mary had had revealed to her the knowledge of true devotion to the Sacred Heart) chased her around the convent, mistreating her physically and mentally for twelve unrelenting hours.

As the visions and instructions from God continued, so did Margaret Mary's agony. But her strength was bolstered by suffering. By 1684 her enemies in the convent had died, and she gained recognition for the first time when she was made novice mistress, a beloved friend to the young postulants. In 1690, her strength diminished by years of deprivation and compulsion, the heiress of His Heart died in a transport of love, and on the Feast of the Assumption two hundred and thirty years later, she was canonized.

As in all good biographies of saints, the single thread of triumphant good outlasts in one's memory the whole tapestry of determined evil. So the night of monastic persecution sinks into nothingness beside the enduring purity of the victim. It was almost as if the world's constant devils attacked the saint wherever she was, behind or before convent walls, but she needed them to clear her way to sanctity and union with her Beloved.

Classified

★RATES, payable in advance: 16⅔c a word (6 words, $1). Centered lines $1 each. 12 words or 2 lines minimum. Discounts: 5% for 3 times, 10% for 7 times, 15% for 13 times.

IRISH BOOKS AND GIFTS

★ Books, Linens, Gifts, *Catalogs.* IRISH INDUSTRIES DEPOT INC. 870 Lexington Ave., (near 65th), New York

CHESTERTON AND BELLOC

★Scarce Chesterton and Belloc Books 250 Titles. Free Catalogue. Prosser, 3118 N. Keating, Chicago 41, Ill.

BOOKS

★Order any book in print from ROBBINS BOOK CO. *No postage charges,* prompt service. 1704 Race St., Philadelphia 3, Pa.

CHRISTMAS CARDS

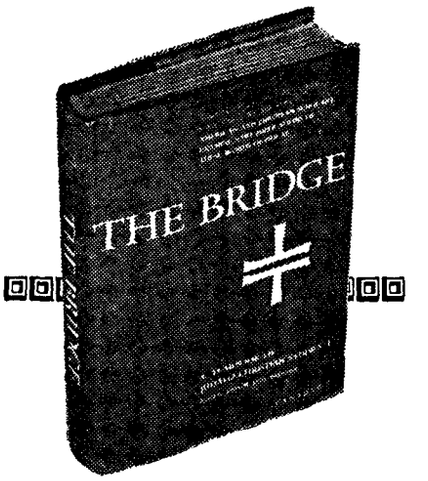
★XPmas Cards by Ade Bethune Box A: 25, $2. Box B: 10, $1. ST. LEO SHOP, Newport, R. I.

STATUES

★Every kind of religious statue done to order. Reasonable. ST. BENEDICT STUDIO, Westport, Conn.

PRINTED LABELS

★ 500 Gummed Labels, printed 3 lines, $1. HERDMAN, 520 Belleville Ave., Belleville, N. J.



"A book of great significance"

—JACQUES MARITAIN

THE BRIDGE

A Yearbook of Judaeo-Christian Studies edited by John M. Oesterreicher

THE FIRST of a series devoted to an intellectual and spiritual encounter between Christians and Jews. Studies by American and European scholars on the morality of the patriarchs, the book Kohelet, the trial of the Messiah, the *Crucifixions* of Marc Chagall, the enigma of Simone Weil, the spirituality of Abraham Heschel, the meaning of Shylock, the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the Finaly case and other topics. Previews of works by Gregory Dix, Martin Buber, Victor Gollancz, Robert Graves.

WILL HERBERG: "A very significant event in the developing 'Jewish-Christian conversation' . . . In its overall design and in its individual contributions a work of real distinction."

Illustrated, $3.95. At all bookstores
Pantheon Books, Inc., N. Y. 14

Good until January 15!
Commonweal Christmas Gift Subscription Rates
SEE ORDER FORM ON COVER III

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Educational

NEW JERSEY

Caldwell College

Caldwell, New Jersey. A four year liberal arts college conducted by the Sisters of Saint Dominic. Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Liberal Arts, Sciences, Business, Teacher Training, Library Science, Music. Tuition $350, Board $550. Degrees: B.A., B.S., A.A. Catalogue: The Registrar, Caldwell, N. J.

MARYLAND

College of Notre Dame of Maryland

North Charles St., Baltimore 10, Maryland. A fully accredited Catholic College for women, conducted by the School Sisters of Notre Dame. Courses leading to B.A. degree, with concentration in Art, Languages, Literature, Sciences, Music, Social Studies, Speech, Mathematics, Philosophy and Theology. Workshops in Creative Writing. Education courses leading to teacher certification. Pre-medical and laboratory technical training. Full Physical Education program, including Swimming. Address the Registrar.

NEW JERSEY

Delbarton School

Morristown, New Jersey. An hour's drive from the George Washington Bridge or Holland Tunnel. A country day and boarding school for boys conducted by Benedictine Monks. Six forms, comprising the 7th and 8th grades and four years of college preparatory courses. Small classes. Thorough guidance department. Complete athletic program. Write for prospectus to the Headmaster.

RHODE ISLAND

Portsmouth Priory School

Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 23 miles from Providence, 8 miles from Newport, on inland waters of Narragansett Bay. Conducted by Benedictine Monks assisted by Lay Masters. Five forms, 8th grade and four years of high school. Standard Preparatory Course for all colleges and technical schools. Added opportunities in Mathematics and Languages. College Board Examination. Full facilities for athletics including sailing. Address the Headmaster.

A Decent Genius

THE SELECTED LETTERS OF HENRY JAMES. Edited by Leon Edel. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. $4.

By HENRY POPKIN

THIS well edited cross-section of a voluminous correspondence gives Henry James ample opportunity to reveal his amiable, witty self. James was the quintessence of kindness and courtesy, or, in his own words, "a good safe stodgy mass of *tact*." Unlike many celebrated letter-writers, he was far too considerate of the friends he addressed to produce any naked revelations from the depths of his soul. This very limitation shows us what different kinds of merit are possible among letter-writers. Flaubert, Keats, Kafka, and Shaw are very much themselves in their letters, continuously giving voice to the egotism of heart and brain. James, however, is himself only to the degree that his self-imposed conventions permit. He surpasses the others in a quality more lovable than frankness: sympathy. He was always genuinely, earnestly solicitous of his correspondent. He entertained his friends by displaying, instead of his soul, his wit and his pleasant, gregarious personality.

James had a genius for ornament. He prettied up any situation, adorned anything he touched. For him, simplicity always demanded elaborate decorations. A gift of fruit received the full treatment: *"Noblest of Neighbors, and Most Heavenly of Women!* —Your gorgeous, glorious gift shook Lamb House to its foundations an hour or two ago." An austere Norwegian dramatist called for a more flippant tone: "What an old boy is our Northern Henry!" When mourners were comforted, death had to be seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. On R. L. Stevenson: "There have been —I think—for men of letters few deaths more romantically right." Even his mother's illness permitted a quip: "I embrace her as firmly as she can endure."

In one area of his activity, naked purpose was ineffectively concealed —his business dealings with editors and theatre managers. The words are pretty, but his thoughts are plain. In a letter to the close friend who edited the *Atlantic*, he thrust sentiment aside: "I have no right to let it be anything but a pure money question." Requesting a better offer from an actor-manager, he was equally stern, but he was, at least, his old, adverbial self: "I should be obliged to you if you can put the case to me more dazzlingly another way." James needed money, as Mr. Edel tells us, but he earned it without sacrificing his art. He turned dramatist for profit, yet he chose a story difficult to dramatize—"which gave the case a reason more."

Of course, James also did what was expected of him in his letters. He defended his aesthetic principles. expressed judgments on his own works, gossiped about his contemporaries ("Trollope . . . is the dullest Briton of them all."), and disclosed his celebrated indifference to politics. observing that the Women Question is the only thing about Women he did not find interesting. But, best of all is the portrait that emerges of a great writer who was a decent as well as a decorous man.

REVIEWERS

Anthony Bailey, an English writer now living in the U.S., has contributed to the *New Statesman and Nation*, *Twentieth Century*, and other publications.

William Dunlea, a New York journalist, contributes frequently to The Commonweal.

Michael Harrington is a frequent contributor to this and other American journals.

Edwin Kennebeck is on the staff of a New York publishing firm.

Doris Grumbach reviews frequently for The Commonweal and other periodicals.

Henry Popkin is a member of the faculty at Brandeis University.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College Campus tradition of charm and friendliness since 1840. An accredited college; B.A., B.S., B.F.A. degrees. Music, art, secretarial training, journalism, home economics, teaching, speech and radio. Interesting cultural, athletic, social programs. Well-equipped buildings. Catalog.
BOX 105, SAINT MARY-OF-THE-WOODS, INDIANA

"Perfect" — Atkinson, Times
"A charming comedy" —Coleman, Mirror
Cradle Song
CIRCLE IN THE SQUARE, 5 Sheridan Square (7 Ave. & W. 4 St.) Res. OR 5-9437. Closed Mon. Evgs. Incl. SUN. 8:40. Mats. SAT. & SUN. 2:40

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If You Didn't Order The Commonweal before Christmas

There is still time to order gift subscriptions at the bargain Christmas rates. A note enclosing the attached coupon, or a telegram or phone call to the office, will cause a handsome card telling of your gift to be dispatched immediately.

This first issue of the New Year—with the contributions of Donat O'Donnell, Monsignor Ligutti, Graham Greene and Anthony Bailey—is a fair sample of certain things The Commonweal will provide all during 1956. A gift subscription will prove particularly welcome during the alarums and debates of this election year.

A varied fare of political and literary comment, provocative articles by authors who delve beneath the surface, consistent quality that has won for The Commonweal an international reputation—all this may still be placed at the disposal of friends and relatives at moderate cost if you act soon. January 15 is the deadline for reduced Christmas rates: two subscriptions—$13; three—$17; four or more—$5 each. (You may include your own subscription, new or renewal, regardless of expiration date.)

— — — — — — — —SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM— — — — — — — —

THE COMMONWEAL, 386 4th Ave., New York 16. (Murray Hill 3-9685)

Enclosed is $..... Send The Commonweal for one year to:

NAME	NAME
STREET	STREET
CITY	CITY

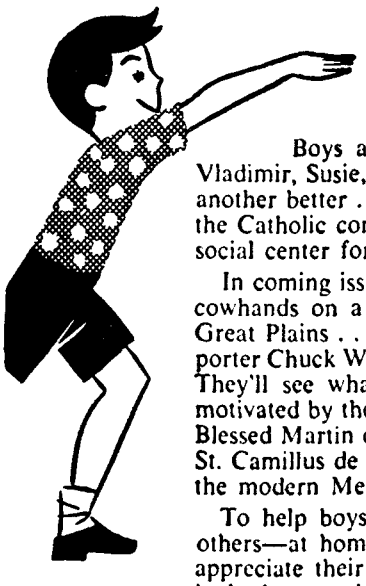
MY NAME IS _____

ADDRESS _____

1-6-56

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

. . . a kind of Christian Social Center . . . for Everyone



Boys and girls of every age—Bill, Pancho, Lee, Vladimir, Susie, Otto, or Gretchen—will learn to know one another better . . . as they enjoy reading TREASURE CHEST, the Catholic comic magazine. It's truly a kind of Christian social center for everyone.

In coming issues they will see what it's like to live as . . . cowhands on a western ranch . . . wheat farmers on the Great Plains . . . citrus growers in Florida. They'll join Reporter Chuck White as he covers an exciting prize fight story. They'll see what it means to be "good neighbors" when motivated by the corporal works of mercy—in the stories of Blessed Martin de Porres . . . St. Louise of Marillac . . . and St. Camillus de Lellis. They'll be inspired by the exploits of the modern Mexican martyr, Father Pro.

To help boys and girls to learn how to get along with others—at home, at school, and in the neighborhood—to appreciate their Christian heritage . . . and to act accordingly, be sure they see the next ten issues of fact and fun in TREASURE CHEST.

GEO. A. PFLAUM, Publisher, Inc.
38 West Fifth Street, Dayton 2, Ohio

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED